



# The Weekly Wrap Up

May 19, 2006

From Viola Miller, Tennessee's Commissioner for  
The Department of Children's Services

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## The Power of QSR

Shortly after I moved to Frankfort and my husband was still living in Murray, I made a trip home for the weekend. There were sheets in the dryer and, trying to be helpful, I began folding them. My husband came in, undid my work, and told me that he didn't like the way I folded sheets. That happened almost 10 years ago, and it should probably come as no surprise that I haven't folded a sheet since.

The QSR is not about how telling someone how to fold sheets. It's not about criticizing. Rather, it's about implementing an extremely powerful process to help us learn and grow. It's about finding strengths -- and opportunities to build on those strengths. The goal never changes, and it never wavers: the provision of the very highest quality casework to every child, every family, every time. The power of the QSR is that it helps us to reach that goal.

The power is just as strong for those doing the reviews as for those being reviewed. The power is in our becoming a learning organization and recognizing that the greatest learning opportunity is in the work we do everyday with every family.

I believe two things very strongly: There is no single, perfect way to fold a sheet and no single, perfect way to deliver quality casework. The work is the striving always to do better.

Sometimes we can get so close to a particular case that we lose sight of the long-term view. We get so worn out with some of our families that our engagement slips. We want the team to go one direction, and it feels like we're herding cats.

We are too busy to listen to the voices, and we miss valuable opportunities to make a difference. None of these events make us "bad" people, but we can learn from them. Making a mistake is no sin; making the same one over and over is! QSR is a tool to drive us toward continuous quality improvement by asking the question, "How can I do this work a little bit better today than I did it yesterday?"

The power of the QSR is also the more we use it, the more second nature the practice wheel will be and the more self-evaluative we will become. My guess is that some of you are already checking through the practice wheel as you work. The more automatic it becomes to think about engagement, teaming, assessment, planning, implementation, tracking and adjustment, the more power the QSR will have.

The sheet story is about one way that criticism can alter behavior. The QSR story is about entirely different way, about the power of strengths-based case review to make us better.

And by the way, my husband has also been known to give lessons in the "right" way to load a dishwasher.

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## West Tennessee Strawberry Festival

Northwest, Gibson County DCS workers and foster parents joined together to recruit new foster parents for our children. We walked as a group in the Grand Floats Parade on May 12<sup>th</sup>, where we handed out recruitment supplies with the logo "Join our Team". This is the second year we have walked down Main Street in Humboldt, TN. We enjoy being involved in our community and spreading awareness to our neighbors of the great need for caring foster parents.

Walkers from DCS included: Kaye Cash, Betty Bruce, Tina Williams, Renee Brown, Carrissa Coleman, India Pipkin, Sharita Jones, Tamika Newbern, Heather Glidewell, Pam King, Becky Merritt, Shannon Hill, Sarah Kerl and foster parents Mike and Cindy Siegler.



Sarah Kerl, Resource Support CM

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## STANGLER TESTIFIES ON PERMANENCY

Gary Stangler, Executive Director of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, testified before the US Senate Finance Committee this month on the subject of permanency for foster youth. We hope that [this testimony](#) will cause the Senate to enact the recommendations that Gary suggests.

Thought you all might enjoy this.

[http://www.state.tn.us/youth/news\\_room/spotlight/FinalWrittenTestimonyofGaryStangler.pdf](http://www.state.tn.us/youth/news_room/spotlight/FinalWrittenTestimonyofGaryStangler.pdf)

**Kim Crane**

Project Director, Child and Family Policy Center  
Vanderbilt Institute for Public Policy Studies

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## Upcoming TNKids Release: Get Your Online Training Now

All TNKids users must complete online training to prepare for the next release due to be implemented June 5th. The training is located at the following web address:

<http://preservice.sworps.utk.edu/tnkidsweb06/index.html>

From the main page, select your job responsibility. When the next web page appears, review and complete each training module under Print Friendly PDF documents and under PowerPoint Slide Presentations. When all the modules have been reviewed, complete the online evaluation by following the Online Evaluation link and report your training hours to your regional training coordinator. The training hours are listed at the top of the page for your job responsibility (for example: Employee Credits=7.5 hours). If you have any questions or would like to see these changes prior to the implementation, you may visit one of the TNKids labs during Open Lab dates listed below from 8:30-4:00:

Nashville (Center for Adoption Foster Ave.)- June 2  
Tulahoma (Hampton Building at the Academy) - May 19 and June 2  
Memphis (1991 Corporate Ave.) - May 19 and June 2  
Jackson (33 Old Hickory Blvd.) - May 19 and June 2  
Knoxville (2700 Middlebrook Pike) - May 25 and June 2

Johnson City (2557 Plymouth Rd.) - June 2

You may also contact your regional FSA, TNKids Trainer, or Cindy I. Martin in Groupwise for further assistance. Thank you.

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## Accreditation Effort Heads East



**The commissioner, along with Lane Simpson and Brenda Bell, traveled to the Holiday Inn in Morristown for the first regional meeting on accreditation last week.**

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## Human Nature 101 / Part 4

(Excerpt from: *Walk the Recognition Talk*)

“A Letter to Every Manager”

Dear Boss,

OK, maybe I’ve been known to say “I don’t want any pats on the back – just put it in my check”. Well, don’t believe it! Regardless of how I might act, I *do* care a lot about what you and others think of me and what I

do. Recognition is important to me. That's why I wear award pins and display my certificates on the wall.

Believe it or not, I'm looking for more from this job than just a paycheck. There's got to be more, because I'm for sure not going to get rich working in this job. What do I want? I want to feel good about myself and the work I do. I want to feel like I'm an important part of this department. And I tend to gauge my self-worth by others' perceptions, including yours.

I don't expect you to see me as a top-notch performer all the time, no one is. But I do expect to be recognized occasionally when I make that extra effort or offer good ideas or suggestions. And the more you recognize my good work, the more good work I *want* to do – that's just human nature!

I know you're often very busy and probably don't think about recognizing me. And maybe sometimes you figure that since you don't get much recognition yourself, why should you give it to others? But if you will just make a greater effort to let me know you appreciate me, I'll do my best to return the favor. And I promise, I won't complain about too much praise being sent my way!

Every Employee

Today's Thought: "I can live for two months on one good compliment!" – Mark Twain

**Sandy Sauceman, Personnel Analyst**

**DCS Human Resource Development**